A

CHARGE

Delivered at a

VISITATION,

Held for the

ARCHDEACONRY

OF

NORTHUMBERLAND.

In the Year, M,DCC,LIX.

BY

THOMAS ROBINSON, *D. D.*

ARCHDEACON *of* NORTHUMBERLAND.

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A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

HOUSE OF LORDS

ON

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 1756.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A

PUBLIC FAST.

By THOMAS SECKER, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

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IN THE STRAND.

M DCC LVI.

A

CHARGE

Delivered at a

VISITATION, &c.

THE unſolicited honour I have received from that great Perſon, whoſe whole adminiſtration is ſo juſtly reſpectable in this Dioceſe, muſt be my excuſe, if any one ſhall think, that I now appear before you, my Reverend Brethren, with leſs diffidence than becomes the occaſion. With truth I can declare, that no one is more conſcious of his infirmities than I am, or leſs forward to exerciſe himſelf in great matters which are too high for him. Yet I muſt confeſs, that my election to this important truſt by our revered Dioceſan who had ſo ample and worthy a choice before him, is a conſideration which muſt encourage; and it ſhall encourage me to hope for your kind acceptance, whatever defects you may diſcern.

FAVOUR me, I intreat you, with your counſel at all times; and now pray for me, that I may follow the ſteps of that excellent Perſon, who ſo lately and ſo long dignified this office, the loſs of whom you would have lamented with good reaſon, whoever his ſucceſſor had been, but now will have juſter reaſon to deplore, unleſs I ſhall have the happineſs to which I ſhall aſpire, to profit much by his example. From his care, and exactneſs, and provident regard for the information of his ſucceſſors, I have already profited

profited not a little; and by the peruſal of the memorials he left behind him, communicated to me by his worthy ſon, have gained a more complete knowledge of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate of this county, than at my time of life I could ever have arrived at by my own perſonal inſpection, or enquiry. But theſe memoirs are of an early date; and great changes, in many particulars, both for better and worſe, are likely to have happened ſince they were taken; the knowledge of which, if they who are moſt capable, would be pleaſed to impart it, ſhould very thankfully be received by me, who have need of all helps that I can procure, to make me ſerviceable in this ſtation.

YET give me leave to ſay, that there is another knowledge that would be more acceptable ſtill, and might in the event prove more uſeful likewiſe — I mean, a more intimate acquaintance with my worthy brethren, which though theſe publick and ſtated meetings were intended to promote, and are a good commencement of it; yet I ſhall gladly embrace every opportunity of improving it which you ſhall give me, eſpecially when you ſhall favour me with it in that Place where I am moſt capable of ſhewing my reſpect to you.

MY firſt appearance among you in the character I now bear, has made this ſhort preface of perſonal addreſs more neceſſary than I hope it will hereafter be; for the diſcourſes proper for theſe ſolemn meetings are of a different kind, and wiſely appointed for remembrances to the audience, and with equal reaſon to the ſpeaker himſelf, of the ſeveral branches of the miniſterial duty, and of thoſe eſpecially which are leſs obvious to a tranſient view, or moſt liable to be forgot, if not attentively recollected.

IT ſeems ſtrange at the firſt mention, yet the fact will be found true, that whilſt the general obligations of mankind, and of the larger diviſions of them, are ſo clear and conſpicuous, that he who runs may read them, the duties peculiar to private men, or to the ſmaller claſſes and ſubdiviſions, ſhould ſo often be unknown, or unobſerved by thoſe who are moſt concerned to underſtand them perfectly. I ſhall not waſte your time in ſpeculating on this property of the human mind; let us rather conſider, whether we ourſelves be intereſted in this matter; whether there be any thing more immediately affecting and relative to ourſelves, which may hitherto have eſcaped our notice; any thing reſulting from the ſituation and circumſtances which Providence hath aſſigned us, which may diverſify our condition from that of other miniſters of this national church; and whether any peculiar duties, benefits, or diſadvantages, be conſequential of this diverſity.

1. THEN; we may conſider ourſelves as clergymen, whoſe lot has fallen in the moſt remote, and as ſtrangers think it, an obſcure and deſolate part of our native country; far diſtant from its capital city; excluded from the notice of men in power, incapable of acquiring the friendſhip and patronage of thoſe, who have the great preferments and dignities at their diſpoſal; ſo that having once made our election here, we have probably made it for our whole life, and in vain ſhould we look back at any thing more deſirable we have left behind us. A melancholy and mortifying reflection this to reſtleſs and aſpiring minds! but far otherwiſe, I hope, to every one of us, if we regard and value as we ought, the comforts, the benefits, the not imaginary, but true and real happineſs, which flows abundantly from this unenvied ſitu-

ation. What joy ambition finds, let thoſe ſpeak who have experienced it. Few clergymen, I believe, will be of that number. But however that may be; the great cure of this paſſion is undoubtedly the want of hope: for who will be ſo fooliſh as to aim at that which he has no chance of acquiring? and therefore, without much flattery, I may lay it down as a foundation for what ſhall follow, that we, the clergy of this northern diſtrict, are clear of that ambition, to which others, who are placed in ſtations more conſpicuous, muſt often meet with allurements not eaſily withſtood.

And this, I will preſume to ſay, is a moſt valuable bleſſing. For ought we not to be very thankful, that we are free from thoſe painful duties of attendance and dependence, which your riſing men muſt undergo? that we have no anxiety of expectation, no vexation of diſappointment, but enjoy that ſedateneſs and tranquillity of mind, ſo graceful in perſons of our ſacred function, ſo neceſſary, and ſo helpful to its faithful diſcharge? What poſſible avocations can we have from the miniſterial offices, from reſiding upon our cures, from inſtructing our people in publick and in private, in ſickneſs and in health? and as for that learning, which muſt qualify us more completely for this employment, we have all the leiſure we can deſire, to purſue it cloſely and to excel therein, and nothing to diſturb that ſerene and unruffled temper, ſo neceſſary to the ſtudious and contemplative.

For if *ſcribentis otia* be ſuch an advantage to the poet, I am ſure that it is vaſtly more ſo to the divine, whoſe ſtudies are often directed to the ſublimeſt objects, and moſt remote from this world; and though theological ſcience, if not artificially obſcured, is more clear and certain than that of moſt other learned profeſſions, yet in the exhibition of it,

far

ſar greater exactneſs and dignity muſt be preſerved.—An inconvenience, if I may ſo call it, which the *Engliſh* clergy have brought upon themſelves, when they ſeem to have deſigned quite the contrary; when to avoid the ſuppoſed difficulty of ſpeaking extempore, a thing ſo eaſy to thoſe who have been bred to it, they introduced into the pulpit a ſtudied oratory, to excel wherein much labour, and the exertion of great talents is required. I do not ſay, that this accuracy is needful before every audience, but before many it moſt certainly is; and even ſuch of us whoſe ſituation may beſt diſpenſe with it, may do well to employ ſome part of our time in the improvement of this talent, that when called to the exerciſe of it before large congregations, we may appear with becoming dignity, and preſerve the reverence, which, unleſs forfeited by ſome notable defect, is inſeparable from the character of a clergyman.

NOR is this the only advantage which we may reap from our retired ſtation, and that ſerenity of mind which it ought to inſpire. It gives leiſure and temper for other ſtudies, which, though not of equal importance, are highly creditable and ornamental. I own I ſhould be much grieved to hear any one thus argue, "I am ſcholar good enough for "the place where I am fixed; why ſhould I waſte my time "in poring over books? will more *Greek* or *Hebrew* than "I now have, be of any ſervice to me in this pariſh?" Now if I ſhould ſay, it would, perhaps it might not be difficult to prove my aſſertion, and that by a trite ſentence which you all remember,

"*Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes*
"*Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros.*

A country clergyman is not for that reaſon to be a mere ruſtick, nor ought the roughneſs of the place where he may chance to live, to appear in his converſation, his carriage, or his apparel. Yet in ſuch a ſituation to keep clear of this blemiſh, it may be neceſſary to uſe ſome means, and what more proper than polite literature? in order to withſtand the imperceptible imitation to which we are all liable, not only in this, but in many other inſtances of behaviour.

But let us ſuppoſe that both the danger itſelf; and this method of avoiding it, are chimerical; yet human learning may ſtill be allowed its uſe, in the ſingle view of a relaxation and amuſement; to youth the moſt delightful, the moſt ſuitable to manhood, the moſt ſolacing to old age. And who that has any true taſte or ſpirit, would chooſe preferably to ſo noble a recreation, either the ſavageneſs of rural ſports, or the ſloth and effeminacy of domeſtick games, or the impertinence of ſuch company as is uſually to be met with, or even the more elegant entertainments of the eye, or ear: to the latter of which, whatever ſpecious arguments may be urged in its favour, more time than a miniſter of the goſpel has at his command, is ſometimes ſacrificed.

I proceed now to another advantage we evidently derive from that unalterable ſettlement which moſt of us in this country have reaſon to expect.—It muſt needs enable us to do greater good in our reſpective cures, than ſuch of our brethren, whoſe proſpects are more enlarged, and condition fluctuating.

It is natural for us to have a peculiar regard and tenderneſs for the place and people, where, and amongſt whom we are to lead our lives, and to intereſt ourſelves more in the concerns

concerns of thoſe perſons who are united to us by the bond of a perpetual neighbourhood; to which if a ſtill more inviolable, and ſacred connection ſhould be added, it will greatly ſtrengthen our affection, and animate our zeal.

CONSIDER likewiſe, how neceſſary the moſt intimate acquaintance with our people is to the ſucceſsful execution of our office. Can we exhort, or reprove with any proſpect of prevailing, if we are ſtrangers to their peculiar tempers, and to what they will bear? how can we reform their morals effectually, unleſs we know, by perſonal obſervation, what lives they lead? or confirm and improve their virtuous diſpoſitions, if by familiar converſe, the only ſure means of obtaining that knowledge, we have not diſcovered them? or if the very grievances they ſuffer within their own walls, from croſs accidents which few eſcape, are hid from us, how can we apply the various means, which charity, directed by diſcretion, might preſcribe for the eſtabliſhment of domeſtick happineſs and content, ſo conducive to all the ends of religion and piety? But this is a kind of knowledge not eaſily or ſpeedily attained. Long cohabitation, experience, and intimacy muſt give it. But when once acquired, a diſcrete miniſter, with a moderate ſhare of genius or learning, will be infinitely more uſeful in his vocation than the moſt celebrated pulpit orator, or caſuiſtical divine, who has never ſtudied this eſſential ſcience.

THIS ſcience a miniſter, juſt entering upon his cure, with a proſpect of there fixing his abode, will endeavour to learn as ſoon as poſſible, knowing that his labour will not be in vain, but likely to be of perpetual uſe to him; a caſe very different from that miniſter, who accepts his benefice as

a preſent ſupport till ſomething more advantageous ſhall offer. But ſuch of us as have reſided long, and are growing old in the ſame pariſh, need not to be told of the great ability to do good, which we derive from that continuance. The perſons who are now the heads of families, and tranſact the buſineſs of the world around us, were our pupils once; many of them we baptized; we catechized and inſtructed more; moſt of them we have rebuked for the levities of their youth, or have praiſed and rewarded their towardly diſpoſitions; all which acts of early kindneſs or authority are imprinted on their minds, and muſt give them a reverence for us, and us an influence over them, which no new comer, with all the excellence of perſonal character, can hope for in his pariſh.

Of the ſeveral objections to a plurality of benefices, this, tho' I remember not to have heard it mentioned, is, in my judgment, the moſt material of all; that in one of them, a deputy muſt be employed; whoſe ſtipend, however decent and ſuitable, yet ſeldom is, or indeed can be ſufficient to make a man of credit and character conſider his curacy as his final ſettlement, and not to be perpetually looking out for ſomething more advantageous and independent; in which caſe, he will be ſubject, and his pariſh with him, to all the inconveniencies incident, as we have ſeen, to proſpects and deſires enlarged in proportion to the opportunities of advancement; which capital defect were it poſſible to remedy with regard to curates, it might not perhaps be ſo eaſy to demonſtrate the doctrine of pluralities indefenſible, as ſome eminent perſons, juſtly revered for their learning and piety, have conceived it to be, without exception or reſerve of one ſingle inſtance. But as the caſe now ſtands, we may fitly apply to it the words of our Saviour, " The hireling fleeth becauſe he is an

" hire-

" hireling and careth not for the ſheep." He knows full well that his wages are ſhort, and hopes that his time will be ſo too. The hope is, in his circumſtances, natural and innocent; but the conſequence of it is a very ſerious thing, and well worth the thought of every pluraliſt from whom this offence cometh.

2. ANOTHER inſtance in which we, the clergy of theſe northern parts, are diſtinguiſhed from our brethren, is that we are borderers upon a country, whoſe eſtabliſhed church, tho' agreeing with us in fundamental doctrines, yet in its forms of worſhip, and eccleſiaſtical government, is very different, and, I may ſay it without offence to any of that communion, as tenacious of its own model as we can be of ours, as ſtiff and rigid in its ſupport, and when occaſion offers, at leaſt as diſcourteous and ſevere to its oppoſers. Were this church as zealous at this time to enlarge it's borders as it is to defend them, a very obvious duty would be incumbent upon us, who ſhould ſtand the foremoſt in this battle. But ſince presbyterian miſſions are now little in vogue, and the zeal to make proſelytes much abated, we need not on this account to be particularly attentive to this circumſtance of our ſituation, nor terrify ourſelves and people with the danger of our church, nor yet be prodigal of pulpit eloquence, to expoſe the frailties and prejudices of our neighbours. Yet let us be very careful to keep clear of that contagion which vicinity may expoſe us to, and ſhun whatever we may ſee amiſs in this church, or in its members; but ſo to ſhun it, as not to run with intemperate zeal into the contrary extreme, often worſe than the fault we are avoiding.

ONE thing there is, of conſequence enough to deſerve your notice, wherein the example of our neighbours ſeems

to have infected us; and I chooſe to mention it the rather, as the correction of it is a principal branch of the archdeacon's duty; and as the compilers of our publick offices have thought it of ſuch importance as to make it the ſole ſubject of one of our homilies; to which homily I refer you for better arguments than I can bring for the duty of repairing and keeping clean of churches. I have been told, I have myſelf ſeen, that this cleanlineſs, neatneſs, and becoming decoration are much diſregarded by our brethren of the *North*; a diſregard not to be imputed to their want of piety, but to their want of taſte. But ill taſte, wherever it reigns, is apt to make inroads into the territories of its neighbours. Some traces of its progreſs may, I fear, be diſcovered in this county of ours; and that, not only in country pariſhes, which may plead their poverty for an excuſe, but even in our moſt wealthy and flouriſhing corporations, which after every other mark of rudeneſs and barbariſm defaced, have ſuffered this, which ought firſt to have been wiped off, to ſtick upon them to this day, indecently conſpicuous. For publick magnificence may well conſiſt with private parſimony; but the reverſe of it is contrary to all rules, and to the manners of wiſe nations. The impropriety is more glaring where religion is concerned; and good *David* ſeems to have been ſurprized that he had not ſooner obſerved it. "See now, ſaith he, "I dwell in a houſe of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth "within curtains." Had he been permitted, he would have rectified the error without delay; and he provided that immenſe treaſure with which *Solomon* built his temple ſo ſumptuouſly.

THERE are ſome other inſtances in which this our neighbourhood may expoſe us to danger; not to the danger of imitating the fault, but of avoiding it with a zeal ſo intemperate

perate and indiſcrete, as may carry us to an extreme far more culpable.

SUPPOSE our presbyterian brethren of the *North* (for they of the *South* are not at preſent to be taxed with it) are more ſcrupulous and preciſe obſervers, than they need to be, of the day which, conſiſtently with their practice, they call the ſabbath; ſhall we, for that reaſon regard it with leſs devotion than is evidently due to the lord's day; a day conſecrated to the honour of our redeemer, and the more ſolemn worſhip of God? on this day, let no miniſter of Chriſt be ſeen in any place of general reſort, but that ſingle one where his duty calls him; on this great feſtival of the chriſtian church, ſacred in our age to publick parade, and the putting on of apparel, let no idle croud of the youthful and the gay ſneer at the black gown, which mixes with it; let it not be to him either a viſiting or a travelling day, except for the purpoſes of godlineſs or charity.

SUPPOSE that theſe our brethren are unfaſhionably formal and prolix in ſome parts of family devotion, let not any of us, for fear of the ſcorner, and his impious ridicule, be content to mutter at our table a few haſty words, expreſſive only of our diſregard to the ſovereign benefactor. Or if every theatrical repreſentation is, in their opinion, profane and antichriſtian; ſhall we, in contradiction to this harmleſs prejudice of theirs, countenance with our preſence, and perhaps with our applauſe, that obſcene and profligate ribaldry, which has rendered the *Engliſh* ſtage odious and vile in the eyes of all *Europe*; unexampled, not only by the chaſte dramas of *Athens*, and of *Rome*, but even by the moſt licentious ſcenes which any modern theatre has preſumed to exhibit ſince the firſt revival of letters in this weſtern world? I ſpeak not

this with an intent to intimate that a practice ſo repugnant to good morals, and good fame, is uſual amongſt us.

QUÒD ſi quis veſtrûm, fratres mei juniores, levitate animi, adoleſcentiæ faciliùs condonandâ, imprudens offenderit, mature jam diſcat quid deceat, quid non; perſonæ ſuæ ſanctimoniam, obſecro, tueatur, quam non hiſtrio ridiculus ſcenis agitans, ſed ipſe, proh pudor! ſacerdos ipſe ludicrus, oſtentans in theatro, facit comoediam.

YOU will not think me ſingular or moroſe in theſe my ſentiments, when I have recited to you the words of our very learned, and equally candid, biſhop *Pearce*, to the greater ſynod of the Clergy of this nation.

" CAVENDUM eſt etiam ne üs voluptatibus indulgeamus, " innocuis licet, quibus divinæ legis interpres ſatis graviter " non poſſit intereſſe. Nolim nos venationibus, nolim equo- " rum curſibus, nolim publicis nervorum vocumque concen- " tibus deditos eſſe. Nolim nos aut aſſiduos eſſe in tabernis " hoſpites, aut ea loca frequentare quæ quaſi delubra ullius " generis voluptati dedicata ſunt. Me quidem ſi qui audire ve- " lint, id agant, ut non voluptatem anquirere aut amplexari, " ſed in eam caſu potiùs et fortuitò incidiſſe videantur."

3. ANOTHER thing peculiar to many of the northern clergy is the largeneſs of their pariſhes, thinly indeed inhabited, but of wide extent; an inconvenience, which, where the value of the benefice is ſmall or moderate, cannot be remedied by ſuch additional aſſiſtance, as otherwiſe it might be expected that the incumbent ſhould procure. To this may be aſcribed the groſs ignorance which prevails amongſt the loweſt of our people; and if there be any thing remarkably

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rude and ſavage in their manners, it may be owing to the ſame cauſe, to the few opportunities they have of attending the publick worſhip at their pariſh church, ſo diſtant from many of them.

YOU cannot but remember the agreeable deſcription of a country *Sunday* given us in a book which every one reads with equal pleaſure and inſtruction. "If, ſays this elegant "and admired writer, the keeping holy the ſeventh day "were only a human inſtitution, it would have been the beſt "method that could have been thought of for the poliſhing "and the civilizing of mankind; it being certain that the "country people would ſoon degenerate into a kind of ſa-"vages or barbarians, were there not ſuch frequent returns "of a ſtated time, in which the whole village meet toge-"ther, with their beſt faces, and their cleanlieſt habits, to "converſe with one another, to hear their duties explained "to them, and join together in adoration of the ſupreme be-"ing. This, he ſays, clears away the ruſt of the whole "week." Whereas with us, this cleanſing is often wanting, and the ruſt ſuffered to ſtick on, till it has eat into the very heart and ſoul of the inhabitants.

THIS is a misfortune which will admit of no tolerable alleviation but one; the application of which, with that diligence which it requires, will be a great increaſe of difficulty and burden to the miniſters of theſe extended pariſhes, and yet no more than the nature of our office, and the moſt ſacred engagements oblige us to perform. For we muſt not think that becauſe the diſtance of the church may be ſome excuſe to the low and laborious people if they frequently abſent themſelves from it, that it will be ſo likewiſe to us their paſtors, if when our ſheep are ſcattered abroad, we

ſeek

ſeek not after them; if we do not often viſit our remote and ſtraggling pariſhioners, enquiring after their welfare, inſtructing them in their chriſtian duty, convincing them of the great importance of religion, and of a truth faintly apprehended by moſt of them, the abſolute neceſſity of holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

THIS we are indiſpenſably obliged to do, for their ſoul's ſake committed to us; and the doing of it might have the farther effect of civilizing their manners to a conſiderable degree; for this has been the uſual effect of the mere knowledge of Chriſt's religion, in the ſeveral regions of the earth which it has viſited.

I SHALL only obſerve that methods may poſſibly be contrived to make this part of our office more eaſy and expeditious than at firſt ſight it appears to be. There are few parts of this our country ſo uncultivated and wild, where decent and hoſpitable houſes may not be found at moderate diſtances from each other, in any of which the miniſter of the pariſh would be an acceptable gueſt, and from thence might viſit at proper intervals, all the families in that neighbourhood; which probably was the method before diſtinct pariſhes were marked out; when the presbyters reſided with their biſhop at the mother church, and were occaſionally ſent out by him to exerciſe their function in the remoter parts of the dioceſe. But having declared what I think we are obliged to do in this inſtance, it is not my buſineſs to preſcribe the method of doing it; which every one will chooſe, as beſt ſuits with his own convenience, opportunity, or inclination.

4. ONE more remark ſhall conclude this diſcourſe, for length

length of which I have already ſome need to apologize, eſpecially ſince the worthy preacher, who has my hearty thanks for this good office, has ſo well reminded us of our duty, in the important articles he has handled.

THE northern dioceſes have one peculiar diſadvantage, that a far leſs proportion of our clergy than is uſual in others have been bred at our univerſities. I ſhall not enquire into the cauſes of this omiſſion, whether it be the poverty of parents, or the diſtance of place; but rather ſhall conſider what conſequence it may be ſuppoſed to have, and what inconvenience it may lay us under.

IT was my fortune to reſide long, and to have ſome concern in the inſtruction of youth, in a college once famed for the ſcholars it bred, and ſtill maintaining its antient character; from which circumſtance you may perhaps expect in me a ſtrenuous advocate for the neceſſity of academical education to every clergyman. But in this I ſhall diſappoint my audience; for how high ſoever my veneration of our univerſities may riſe, I am not able to diſcern the ſuppoſed inſeparable connection between the learning there taught, and the miniſterial office; the ſeveral duties of which may well and reputably be diſcharged in country pariſhes, by the help of that learning which may be acquired in a more private way, and in which alone the candidates for holy Orders are therefore examined. A man may be an orthodox expounder of ſcripture, a ſound and uſeful preacher of God's word, an excellent pariſh prieſt in every branch of duty, tho' he can neither demonſtrate a propoſition of *Euclid*, nor follow *Plato* in his intricate reaſonings, nor tell the number or names of the ſtars. But this is the literature which is properly academical; and this too, let me tell you, is the phi-

loſophy by which many have been ſpoiled; I mean, by thoſe ſcattered grains, which young ſophiſters are ſo eager to pick up in their haſty flight through theſe ſeminaries of ſcience, which ſerve only to ſwell their vanity, to make them pert and captious when they come out into the world, contemptible to plain people, who have no conception of theſe ſubtilties, yet have natural good ſenſe, and variety of ſound knowledge, vaſtly preferable to all the cant and jargon of the ſchools.

HERE then, it is obvious to ask, of what real uſe are theſe two ſplendid nurſeries of learning which this nation boaſts of, and to what purpoſe ſerves the expence and magnificence beſtowed upon them? I anſwer that it is well beſtowed. For when I denied, that an univerſity education was neceſſary to a clergyman, I meant thoſe miniſters only, whoſe commendable modeſty can be contented with an inferior ſtation in the church, and to preach the goſpel to the poor; no mean employment we ſhall think, when we conſider who once did it. But it is far otherwiſe with regard to thoſe who aſpire to more conſpicuous poſts, and to fill the places of dignity and pre-eminence; from whom it is expected that they ſhould ſtand up the champions of the chriſtian cauſe, confuting the falſe divinity, and as falſe philoſophy of its adverſaries, many of whom not contemptible for learning or acuteneſs have appeared in our days. And as the gentry of this nation are much advanced, and by the late noble improvements of the academical inſtitution are ſtill likely to advance more and more, in every kind of polite literature; the ſuperior clergy will have need of all the help which this moſt perfect kind of education can afford them, if they mean to preſerve that rank in the republick of letters, which in former days they poſſeſſed unrivalled.

THIS

THIS then, is the deſign of our univerſities; it is to carry learning to its full perfection, and to make great and finiſhed ſcholars, of thoſe who are capable of, and who aſpire to that character. But ſuch high accompliſhments are not to be inſiſted on as needful to all who devote themſelves to the miniſtry of the goſpel, if they will be content to move in their proper ſphere, for which only their education has fitted them; and in which, I will be bold to ſay, they are more truly reverend and reſpectable, than they, if any ſuch there ſhould chance to be, whom their own preposterous ambition, aided by the partiality or caprice of powerful men, has advanced to high poſts, without ſuitable qualifications.

I DO not hereby mean to diſcourage hope in any one, or to draw a veil before any proſpect, which is conſiſtent with a contented mind, or is a proper incentive to laudable behaviour. There is no need to go this length, not even in this northern dioceſe, where the accompliſhed Prelate preſiding over us is ſo ready to reward worth in the loweſt of his clergy, and where the perſon whom he has been pleaſed to honour with this truſt will always rejoice to acquaint him with it.

BUT let not the views of any pious and good miniſter terminate in this point, which, however worthy an object it may be, is not the ultimate, is not the adequate, of true ambition. Let him look forward to that important day, when the chief ſhepherd ſhall himſelf appear, and every ſubordinate paſtor who has been careful to feed his flock, ſhall be recompenced to his heart's deſire. Neither inferiority of rank, or of intellectual endowments, or ſimplicity of manners,

ners, or unskilful addreſs, ſhall be a bar on that day, to any one's preferment; but he, on whom the feweſt talents have been beſtowed, may by an honeſt and diligent application of them, ſecure to himſelf a conſpicuous place in the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, conferred on him with that moſt gracious and truly dignifying form of words,

WELL done, thou good and faithful ſervant! thou haſt been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

FINIS.